

**State Office of Protection and Advocacy
for Persons with Disabilities**

A.D.A.

P.P.T.

I.D.E.A.

**"SPECIAL EDUCATION
IS NOT A PLACE"**

SEC. 504

I.E.P.

An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students

“Special Education Is Not A Place”

An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students

Table of Contents

Section I:	Becoming Your Child’s Best Advocate (Advocacy Strategies for Parents and Guardians)	Page 1-3
Section II:	If Not You, Who? (Advocating for Yourself)	Page 1-4
Section III:	LD.E.A.	Page 1-55
	1. What is IDEA?	Page 1
	2. Eligibility for Services Under IDEA	Page 4
	3. Evaluations	Page 8
	4. The Planning and Placement Team	Page 11
	5. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	Page 14
	6. Related Services in Special Education	Page 17
	7. Procedural Provisions Under IDEA	Page 19
	8. Extended School Year Services	Page 24
	9. Discipline Procedures Under IDEA	Page 26
	10. Transition Services	Page 32
	11. Assistive Technology	Page 35
	12. Birth to Three Services	Page 38
	13. Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act	Page 41
	14. Important Terms	Page 46
	15. Model Letters and Forms	Page 49
	16. Services At-A-Glance (from Birth To Adult)	Page 55
Section IV.	Medical Needs and Related Services	Page 1-5
Section V.	Services for Adults with Disabilities	Page 1-5
Section VI.	Additional Resources	Page 1-7

Produced by:

State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
60B Weston Street - Hartford, Connecticut 06120-1551
(860) 297-4300 (Voice); (860) 566-2102 (TDD); 1-(800) 842-7303 (toll-free)
e-mail address: OPA-Information@po.state.ct.us
internet address: www.state.ct.us/opapd

PLEASE NOTE: This publication is not intended to
offer substantive legal advice that can only be provided by an attorney.

This publication is available on our website
and provided in alternate format upon request.

Funding provided by the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Section I.

Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate

(Advocacy Strategies For Parents and Guardians)

You, as a parent, know your child best. It is you who can speak most effectively on your child's behalf in order to secure his/her educational rights under the law. Your knowledge of the school system's procedures, as well as state and federal laws and related regulations, is essential to becoming an effective advocate.

Step #1: Get organized

Know your child's rights as well as your rights as a parent. Learn about Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) and Planning and Placement Teams (PPT's), independent evaluations, related services, due process and other aspects of state and federal laws. The Special Education Resource Center (SERC and the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities are excellent resources for parents interested in learning about their rights. Accumulate as much information as you can from as many sources as possible.

Talk with professionals, teachers and others who have worked with and know your child. Find out if there is an organization in the state that might be a resource for the your child's specific disability. (See list of disability groups at end of Manual). Comprehensive information about your child's disabilities, strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, and educational needs is key to effectively advocating for your child.

Trust your instincts. Collect information about your child's educational needs from your own observations. What you see in your child's behavior and personality – strengths and weaknesses - is as important in the development of an educational plan as your child's disability label.

Keep a complete file of all school records regarding your child. You never know when having a comprehensive paper trail will be necessary should you need to pursue mediation or a formal due process hearing.

Step #2: Develop advocacy strategies

Begin with the assumption that you are an equal partner with school personnel in the development of your child's education program. Often times school personnel may treat you as if you know nothing about special education and should rely on them for "the answer". Don't be intimidated. Expect to work as an equal member of the special education team (called a Planning and Placement Team or PPT), and gently but firmly communicate your expectations to school personnel.

Develop a vision for your child's future. What would you like his/her life to be like as an adult? Share your vision with other team members, and make that vision part of every decision that is made about your child's school program. Let your vision guide you as you and the team develop long and short term goals. Don't limit your dreams to what currently exists or what has typically occurred in the lives of others with disabilities similar to your child's.

"Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome".

- Samuel Johnson

Before you attend a PPT meeting, identify what you think needs to be done at the meeting and cite all supporting evaluations and records. It may be helpful to write down the goals and objectives you have for your child before the meeting so you won't become confused or distracted as the meeting progresses. Identify programs and services you believe are required to meet your child's learning needs and to build on his/her learning strengths. The more you can use relevant evaluations and reports to support your recommendations, the better.

Recruit people who are familiar with your child to assist with his or her educational planning. Work out an arrangement with a friend who can attend school meetings with you to offer emotional support. It can be difficult sometimes for parents to express themselves at a meeting where many professionals are present.

Take notes, or have a friend take notes for you. You may also bring a tape recorder to the meeting. This is perfectly legal under state and federal regulations. Also, make sure you get a copy of any written record of the meeting. Make sure that the record

is accurate and includes any important statements or requests you may have made during the meeting.

If, during the course of the meeting, you hear things that don't sound right to you speak up! Do not hesitate to refute or question any contradictory data or biases that you have found in any evaluations and records.

Step #3: In between meetings

One of the best ways to support your child is to be a good communicator. Know and stay in touch with his/her teachers, especially through parent-teacher conferences. Don't hesitate to call a teacher to express any concerns you may have. Attend all meetings concerning your child.

Identify and get involved with other parents of children with disabilities and organizations that are concerned with the needs of families and children with disabilities. Parent support groups exist in many parts of the state. Contact the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (P&A) or the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) to find a group near you. If none is available, consider starting your own parent support group.

Above all, be persistent! It will not be easy. You may find that you get tired of constantly fighting battles on behalf of your child. Hang in there and keep advocating, but remember to find ways of getting the emotional support you need, perhaps with other parents who are fighting similar battles. It is important to take care of your own needs as you pursue what's best for your child.

**"Three great essentials
to achieve anything
worthwhile are, first,
hard work; second,
stick-to-itiveness;
third, common sense."**

- Thomas Edison

Section II.

If Not You, Who?

(Advocating For Yourself)

As a teenager with a disability, you encounter more stresses and challenges than the average high school student. How you deal with these stresses and challenges will determine how you will do when you leave high school and enter post high school education or the world of work. Learning to advocate for yourself could be the most important high school lesson you learn.

Self advocacy is nothing more than protecting your own rights and interests. It involves making choices and decisions for yourself, and not relying solely on parents, teachers or other professionals to always make decisions that affect you. Listening to what others have to say is important, but ultimately only you can determine the path your life will take.

Rights and Responsibilities

You have a right to know the programs and services that are being provided for you. You also have a right to participate in the planning processes where decisions are being made about the services you will receive, and where you will receive them.

In addition to your rights, you have a responsibility to learn all you can about the laws and regulations that govern your school program. Terms like "IEP", "PPT", "LRE", related services, independent evaluations, and due process are all part of the special education language you need to understand.

Until you are eighteen years old, your parents have the legal authority to represent your interests at school meetings. You should therefore discuss your problems or concerns with them before any meeting in which your school program is

being considered. It is important that you work as a team with your parents so that your interests are represented effectively!

One final point before we discuss the specifics of special education: having a disability means you are different in certain ways from other kids. Some people you meet may be ignorant about disability, and they may treat you as if your disability makes you bad or inferior. It does not! Whether you have a disability that is visible, or one that is not readily seen, you are a human being first and foremost, and have a right to be treated as such. The most important person who needs to believe this is you. Respect yourself before you can expect others to respect you.

The Specifics

The school system in your town or city is required under state and federal law to tailor your school program to meet your educational needs as a special education student. The terms noted earlier – IEP, PPT, etc. - are all terms derived from state and federal laws and regulations.

Here is a brief summary of how the special education planning process works:

- What is an IEP? – an IEP (Individualized Education Program) is a written document that identifies the educational program and supports you will receive to enable you to benefit from your school experience.
- Who is involved? – a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) is made up of teachers, parents, support staff, outside agencies (if any) and you (if you are old enough to participate, typically around age 12).
- What does the PPT do? – a PPT discusses your strengths and weaknesses, reviews progress made since the previous year’s review, plans the activities and the services you will receive next year, and reviews requests from you and your parents.
- What should the IEP include? – an IEP should include not only the services you need to help you learn in school, but also transition goals and objectives. These goals and objectives should include the services necessary to address

“Special Education Is Not A Place”
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section II. If Not You, Who?
page 3

employment needs, post high school education, and training opportunities that may be appropriate for you.

- When and where do PPT meetings take place? – usually during the school day, and generally in a school conference room or classroom.
- Why do PPTs take place? – state and federal law requires that each student with disabilities have an educational program that meets his or her needs.

You should consider a number of strategies that will make your participation more effective. Think about your school program before the meeting, and consider which services are meeting your needs and the services that need improvement. Discuss your concerns with your parents. It may be helpful to write down the points you want to make before you go into the meeting.

What They Won't Tell You

Some participants at the PPT meeting may be resistant to your presence. They may not be used to students speaking up for themselves and expressing their thoughts about their programs. Adults may interrupt you, talk over you, or not respond to your questions or concerns. Don't let them! Respectfully but firmly insist that they allow you to be heard. It is your meeting.

Professionals may use terms that are confusing to you. Do not hesitate to ask them to slow down, or take a few minutes to explain a term to you. You have a right to know what they are talking about when they are discussing your future. Don't let them intimidate you! You know yourself and what your needs are better than anyone else.

You should also take notes about what people are saying and the decisions that are made at a PPT meeting. It is also permissible to bring a tape recorder to a PPT meeting to record what is being said.

Finally, don't be afraid to speak up, especially if they say:

- they agree with you but can't do anything about the situation.
- they don't have the money.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section II. If Not You, Who?
page 4

- they are the experts and they know best.
- you should be thankful for what you have, or it could be worse.
- you are too emotional, or you don't understand how things are done.

Remember, your future is being discussed, and while you should listen to the ideas and perspectives of professional educators, no one is in a better position to know what works best for you than you. You need to learn the skills necessary to represent your interests now and in the future.

Final Thoughts

Additional information about your rights under other federal laws can be found in the Section entitled "Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act". (*See Sub-Section #13 of Section III.*) Information about services available to adults with disabilities can be found in the section entitled "Services for Adults with Disabilities" (Section V).

If you need additional information about your eligibility for services, support groups that might exist in your area, or any other information related to your disability, refer to the Resource Guide at the end of this manual, or call the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities in Hartford at (860) 297-4300 (Voice), toll-free at 1-800-842-7303 (V/TDD); or (860) 297-4380 (TDD).

**"Hold fast to your dreams,
for if dreams die, then life
is like a broken, winged
bird that cannot fly."**

- Langston Hughes

Section III. I.D.E.A.

1. What is IDEA?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, was originally passed by Congress in 1975 as Public Law 94-142, The Education For All Handicapped Children Act. IDEA ensures the right to a free, appropriate, public education for eligible students with disabilities. This right is often referred to as an entitlement to a FAPE (free, appropriate, public education). *See Sub-section #2 of this Section for Information on Eligibility for Services Under IDEA.*

Under IDEA, the public school district (also know as the local education agency or LEA) where the child resides, is responsible for making sure that each child with a disability receives special education and related services appropriate to his/her individual needs. *(See Sub-section #6 of this Section for additional information on related services.)* How and where the services are provided is determined by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) and should be included in the child's Individualized Education Program, or IEP. *(See Sub-sections #4 and #5 of this Section for additional information on the PPT and IEP.)* The public school district remains the responsible party even if a child is placed in another public or private educational program through the process described above.

What is a free appropriate public education?

The word "free" means that the cost of providing special education and related services is the responsibility of the public school district in which the child resides, and cannot be passed on to a child's parents or guardians. To offset certain costs, public school districts may bill a third party, such as a family's private health insurance carrier or Medicaid, provided they obtain the permission of the parent or guardian. School districts, however, cannot force parents to consent to third party

billing if it would cause financial loss (such as a decrease in available spending cap or lifetime insurance coverage, an increase in insurance premiums, the termination of an insurance policy, or the payment of deductibles).

"Appropriate" means that special education and related services must be tailored to a child's individual and unique needs, not to the child's disability label. Further, it should enable the child to access the general curriculum of the public school district, and make progress in achieving the goals/objectives identified in his/her IEP.

It is important to remember that IDEA does not entitle students with disabilities to the best or optimal education. Rather, services provided should allow them to receive meaningful educational benefits and show reasonable progress as a result of the program provided by the public school district.

How are the appropriate amount and type of services my child needs determined?

The individual and unique needs of each eligible child with a disability should determine the amount and type of services to be provided. These decisions must be made at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting. The PPT typically consists of teachers, school administrators and other professionals involved in the educational program of your child. Parents are equal members of the PPT and the law encourages their input in decision making.

**"The dogmas of the
quiet past are inadequate
for the stormy present...
We must think anew
and act anew."**

- Abraham Lincoln, 16th
President of the United States

Please note, while there is a distinction between the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team detailed in IDEA, most public school districts refer to meetings held for the following purposes as PPT meetings:

- reviewing referrals for special education.
- planning and reviewing evaluation and re-evaluation results.

- determining whether a child is eligible for special education services.
- developing, reviewing and revising a child's Individualized Education Program.

(See Sub-section #4 of this Section for additional information on the PPT process.)

What if my school district says it does not have the staff or resources available to meet my child's needs?

The lack of personnel and/or resources does not excuse the local school district from providing a free, appropriate public education for an eligible child with a disability. The law is clear: the school district must provide the services and supports identified in his/her IEP.

Identification in an IEP is an indication that the services are appropriate, and parents have a right to ensure that these services are provided to their child.

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to approve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and injustice."

- Robert F. Kennedy

2. Eligibility for Services Under I.D.E.A.

Who is eligible to receive special education and related services?

IDEA requires state and local educational authorities to do outreach to identify children who might be eligible for special education and related services. A child is eligible under IDEA if:

- a child is between the ages of 3 and 21 has one or more of the disabilities listed below.
- the disability adversely affects the child's educational performance.
- by reason of the disability the child requires special education and related services (as determined through a formal evaluation).

The categories of disability listed in the IDEA are:

1. Autism - a disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects educational performance.
2. Deafness - a severe hearing impairment that limits a child's ability to process linguistic information and which adversely affects educational performance.
3. Deaf-Blindness - simultaneous hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that a child cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.
4. Hearing Impairment - an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a child's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of "deafness".
5. Mental Retardation - significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 5

6. Multiple Disabilities - simultaneous impairments (such as mental retardation/blindness, mental retardation/other impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that the child cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include children with deaf/blindness.
7. Orthopedic Impairment – a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a birth condition (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some limb, etc), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.) and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).
8. Other Health Impairment - having limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. According to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services' clarification statement of September 16, 1991, eligible children with ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) might also be classified under "Other Health Impairment" or "Specific Learning Disability" categories.
9. Serious Emotional Disturbance - (1) a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance: (a) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems; (2) the term includes children who have schizophrenia. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have a serious emotional disturbance.
10. Specific Learning Disability - a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as

perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation or emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

11. Speech or Language Impairment - a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
12. Traumatic Brain Injury - an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, which adversely affects educational performance. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.
13. Visual Impairment, including Blindness - a visual impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both children with partial sight and those with blindness.

Under Connecticut state law, children aged 3-5, inclusive, who are diagnosed with developmental delay, and those age 3-21 who have a neurological impairment, may also be eligible for services under IDEA.

What about Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

Although Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are not included explicitly in the list of disabilities recognized by IDEA, a child with ADD or ADHD might be eligible for special education and related services under the Other Health Impairment (OHI) category. ADD and ADHD are included in OHI category as examples of a chronic or acute health problem. In order to be eligible for special education under OHI, the ADD/ADHD must be shown to adversely affect the child's educational performance, and requires specially designed instruction.

What if the PPT refuses to evaluate my child?

The decision of the PPT is not final. If the PPT determines that your child does not need to be evaluated, you may start due process proceedings to contest the decision. *See Sub-section #7, Procedural Provisions Under IDEA, for more information on this process.*

What help is available for children with disabilities who are not eligible for special education under IDEA?

Sometimes children have disabilities but are not eligible under IDEA because they do not need specially designed instruction to meet their unique needs. However, these students have the right to be protected from discrimination on the basis of disability under two other federal laws:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

For more detailed information on these federal laws that protect children and adults from discrimination based on the presence of a disability, see Sub-section #13 of this Section.

3. Evaluations

What is the procedure for having my child evaluated?

Each school district in the state is required to reach out and try to locate all children between the ages of birth and 21 who might need special education. "Child Find" is the term used for this identification process. Anyone – a parent, teacher, student, nurse, doctor, social worker – may request that a child who appears to have a disability be considered for special education. In Connecticut, Child Find for children from birth to age three is conducted through the Birth to Three System, administered by the Department of Mental Retardation.

Typically, there are two ways in which a child is identified as needing an individualized evaluation. The first is that the school suspects the presence of a disability and asks the parents for permission to evaluate the child. The second is that the child's parents may write or call the school and request that their child be evaluated. They might believe that the child is not progressing as he/she should, or they may notice particular problems in how the child learns. If the school suspects that the child, indeed, might have a disability, then the school must conduct an individualized evaluation. *Please see Model Letter #2 in Sub-section #15 of this Section to help you with this request.*

What are the requirements for the evaluation process?

Federal law is specific about the requirements for evaluating students:

- review existing data to identify what, if any, additional data is needed to determine if a child is eligible for special education (or in the case of re-evaluation, continues to be eligible for special education).
- parental consent must be secured for the initial evaluation of a child.
- the child must be evaluated individually, not as part of a larger group.
- the evaluation must be conducted by a team or group of people, which must include at least one teacher or specialist knowledgeable about the area of the child's suspected disability, and it must be conducted by people trained and knowledgeable in the specific test being used.

- tests must be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when given to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factors the test claims to measure.
- rather than reflecting the child's impaired skills (except where those skills are the factors the test claims to measure).
- more than one test or procedure must be used to determine the child's educational program, and tests and other evaluation materials must include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- the child must be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communication status, and motor abilities.
- tests must be conducted in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- tests and other evaluation materials must not be racially or culturally biased.
- the evaluation must be comprehensive enough to identify all of the child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child is classified.

When should re-evaluations occur?

The law requires that a student be re-evaluated at least every three years to determine the following:

- if he/she continues to be eligible for special education.
- his/her present level of performance and educational needs.
- if any additions or modifications to the special education program and/or related services are needed to enable the student to meet the goals set in his/her IEP, and to participate as appropriate in the general (regular education) curriculum.

Re-evaluations shall be conducted more frequently than every three years when necessary to monitor the student's progress and the effectiveness of the educational program. Informed written parental consent is required for re-evaluation. Both parents and teachers may request re-evaluations. Parents also have the right to give input into what additional data may be needed.

What if a parent does not agree with the school district's evaluation?

If a parent disagrees with the public school district's evaluation, they have the right to request an independent evaluation, paid for by the public school district. Once a parent makes this request the public school district must respond without unnecessary delay, and either agree to an independent evaluation at its expense or initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation was appropriate. *Please see Model Letter #3 in Sub-section #15 of this Section to assist you with this request.*

If a hearing officer determines that the public school district evaluation was appropriate, parents may still obtain an independent evaluation, but at the parent's expense. The public school district may provide the parent with a list of evaluators in the area. Parents do not have to select from this list, but the evaluator selected must be qualified (licensed or certified) to perform the evaluation. In addition, the criteria under which the independent educational evaluation is obtained must be the same as the public school district would use for its own evaluation.

The public school district must consider the results of this independent evaluation in making educational decisions about a child, but is not required to implement the results or recommendations of the independent educational evaluation. If the results of the independent evaluation are not addressed in the IEP, parents may initiate procedural provisions available to them under IDEA. *(See Sub-section #7 in this Section.)*

**"We often discover
what will do, by finding out
what will not do; and
probably he who never
made a mistake never
made a discovery."**

- Samuel Smiles, Scottish author

4. The Planning and Placement Team

What is the Planning and Placement Team, and what is its role?

The Planning and Placement Team, or PPT, must be convened for every purpose regarding special education, including:

- to review referrals for special education, to determine if a child needs to be evaluated.
- to identify which evaluations are necessary.
- to determine whether or not a child is eligible for special education and related services.
- to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a child who is eligible for special education and related services.
- to review the IEP at least once per year to determine whether annual goals for the child are being achieved.
- to revise the IEP, as appropriate, to address any lack of progress toward annual goals and in the general curriculum, the results of any re-evaluations conducted, and any information about the child provided by the parent.

When the PPT meets for the purposes of developing, reviewing, or revising the IEP, or to identify which evaluations may be necessary, members of the IEP team (as described below) must be present.

The distinction between the IEP Team and the PPT may seem confusing. Simply stated, the PPT is an entity under Connecticut law, the IEP Team under federal law. The important thing for parents to know is that most public school districts in Connecticut refer to meetings held for all purposes noted above as PPT meetings, and that is the term used most often.

Who is a member of the Planning and Placement Team?

The PPT includes a school administrator, teacher, and pupil personnel staff member, such as a school psychologist or social worker. When the PPT is meeting for

purposes related to a child's IEP, or to identify which evaluations may be necessary, it must also include the following IEP team members:

- the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- the child when appropriate.
- a regular education teacher (if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment).
- a representative of the public school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially-designed instruction to meet the needs of children with disabilities; knowledgeable about the general curriculum; and knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public school district (may be one of the professionals listed above).
- an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results (may be one of the professionals listed above).
- other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child.

**"Men must
be capable of imagining
and executing and insisting
on social change if they
are to reform or even
maintain civilization,
and capable too of
furnishing the rebellion
which is sometimes
necessary if society is not
to perish of immobility."**

- Rebecca West, British author

The PPT does not have to include parents when meeting to review a referral to special education, to determine if a child needs to be evaluated, or to determine whether or not the child is eligible for special education and related services. However, most Connecticut school districts invite parents to participate in all aspects of the PPT process.

What rights do I have as a parent regarding this process?

As a parent or guardian, you have a right to:

- be an equal participant, along with school personnel, in developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP for your child.
- receive a free copy of your child's educational record.
- provide written consent for: the initial evaluation of your child, his/her initial placement in special education, any private school placement, and before any re-evaluation.
- seek resolution of any disagreements by initiating due process. This may be either mediation or a hearing. *(See Sub-section # 7 of this Section for more detailed information.)*
- obtain an independent educational evaluation at the school's expense when you disagree with an evaluation completed by the school, providing certain conditions are met. *(See Sub-section #3 of this Section for detailed information.)*
- an interpreter at PPT meetings if a parent has a hearing impairment or does not understand English.
- add ideas by phone or in a letter. (PPT meetings can be held without parents present if parents choose not to come, or if the public school district can document the results of its repeated attempts to have parents participate in the scheduled meeting.)
- invite an advisor or friend to a PPT meeting to act as an advocate, or simply lend moral support.
- expect the public school district to schedule PPT meetings at a time and place convenient for you.
- receive written notice of a PPT meeting at least five school days prior to the meeting. The notice should be written in your dominant language and state the purpose, time and location of the meeting as well as who will be in attendance.
- request a PPT meeting by letter or phone (due to concerns about your child's IEP, placement, etc.) *Please see Model Letter #1 in Sub-section #15 of this Section to assist you with this request.*

5. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

The IEP is a written plan, developed by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT), which details the educational program for your child, once he/she is determined to be eligible for special education and related services under IDEA. Every child with a disability who needs special education must have a written IEP within 45 days from the date of the initial referral. IEP's must be reviewed and updated at least once per year, usually in the spring. However, parents or school personnel may request a PPT meeting for this purpose at any time.

What should my child's IEP include?

The PPT determines whether or not your child requires special education and related services based upon the results of evaluations. After that determination is made, the PPT then develops and implements the following components of your child's IEP:

- **Present level of educational performance**
Your child's IEP should start by stating how your child is currently doing at school. This is called his/her "present level of performance". Your child's strengths and weaknesses should be identified, as well as the skills or areas that need to be addressed. Information should be drawn from recent evaluations, observations, and input from you and school personnel. One area of emphasis in IDEA is how your child's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general curriculum (i.e., that which is used in the regular classroom for children without disabilities).
- **Annual goals (and benchmarks or short-term objectives)**
Having identified how your child is doing in school and, in particular, where he/she is having difficulty, the PPT should focus on determining what educational goals are appropriate, given your child's unique strengths and needs. The goals must be updated at least annually and be defined in measurable terms. Properly

done, goals should be developed that identify what your child should reasonably accomplish in one year. They must also include benchmarks, or short-term objectives, that should be met during the course of the school year. Additionally, goals must relate to helping your child be involved in and progress in the general curriculum while also addressing other educational needs that arise out of your child's disability.

- **Special education and related services**

Once the previous steps have been taken, the PPT should then consider what special education and related services a child will require in order to attain the identified goals and needs. The PPT must specify in writing what supplementary aids and services are necessary to enable your child to be involved in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to be educated and participate along with peers without disabilities. Your child's involvement in the general curriculum is one of the primary areas of emphasis in the most recent revision to IDEA regulations. *(See Sub-section #6 of this Section for a description of related services.)*

- **Explanation of non-participation, and the least restrictive environment**

As noted, the IDEA has a strong preference for children with disabilities being educated with their peers without disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate. The federal regulations mandate that children with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment. They should not be removed from the regular classroom unless the nature or severity of their disability is such that education in a regular class, with the use of supplementary aids and services, can not be achieved satisfactorily. The IEP must include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not be participating with peers without disabilities in the regular classroom, in the general curriculum, and in extra-curricular and non-academic activities.

- **Special education students' participation in statewide student assessments**

In the past, children with disabilities often did not participate in assessments of student achievement conducted through their local school district or state, such as the Connecticut Mastery Tests. IDEA requires that all children be included in these assessments, with individual modifications or adaptations made, as necessary, in how the tests are administered. Modifications may include giving a child more time to take the test, allowing the test to be taken in a quiet place, or

having someone write down test responses. The IEP must now contain a statement of the specific modifications that will be made to enable a child to participate in these assessments. The Planning and Placement Team may determine that a child can not participate in such assessments, even with modifications. If this is the case, the Team must include a statement in the child's IEP as to why the assessments are not appropriate for the child and how he/she will be alternately tested.

- **Dates, frequency, location, and duration of services**

Your child's IEP must be very clear about when special education and related services (including modifications) will begin, how long they will go on (duration), how often they will be provided (frequency), and where he/she will receive those services (location). The location where special education and related services will be provided to your child influences decisions about the nature and amount of these services and when they will be provided. For example, the appropriate place for a related service may be the regular classroom, so that your child does not have to choose between a needed service and the regular educational program.

- **Transition services**

IDEA includes a requirement that compels local school districts to provide "transition services" to youth with disabilities. The purpose of this requirement is to focus attention on how your child's educational program can be planned to help him/her make a successful transition to life after high school. (*See Sub-section #10 of this Section for information on transition planning.*)

- **Measuring and reporting your child's progress**

The IEP must include a statement of how your child's progress toward the established short-term objectives and annual goals will be measured, and how you will be kept regularly informed about his/her progress. You must be informed of the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable your child to attain the goals by the end of the school year. You must be informed of your child's progress at least as often as the parents of children without disabilities, such as when mid-term reports and report cards are issued.

6. Related Services in Special Education

What are related services?

Under IDEA, related services mean transportation, and such developmental, corrective and other support services that may be necessary for a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

What are some examples of related services?

Following are examples of related services:

- assistive technology (*see Sub-section #11 of this Section for additional information*)
- medical and rehabilitative services (for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only)
- orientation and mobility training
- physical and/or occupational therapy
- psychological services
- recreation, including therapeutic recreation
- school health services
- social work services
- speech therapy
- vision therapy
- vocational services

Who decides what, if any, related services will be provided to my child?

The extensive nature of the evaluation process should provide enough information to determine an appropriate educational program for your child. (See Sub-section #3 of this Section for information on evaluations.) Based on this information, which, if any, related services your child will need will be identified at a PPT meeting.

Once this is determined, the following must be included in your child's IEP:

- the related service(s) needed.

- the type of service (e.g., direct service to the child, consulting services to teachers).
- the type of service provider (e.g., occupational therapist)
- how often and for how long the related services will be provided (e.g., 2 times per week for 45 minutes per session throughout the school year)

Who is responsible to pay for related services?

It is the responsibility of the local school district to ensure that all students with disabilities who are eligible for special education under IDEA receive a free, appropriate public education. This includes related services. School districts may not charge families of students with disabilities for the cost of these services. The district may, however, with your permission, bill a third party (i.e., the parents' medical insurance) for the cost of some services.

What if my child is not eligible for services under IDEA?

Children with disabilities who are not eligible for services under IDEA may receive accommodations, including related services, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if they meet the criteria for protection under this law.

Section 504 specifies that a recipient of federal financial assistance operating a public school program must provide a free, appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability within its jurisdiction. The Section 504 definition of disability is broader than the IDEA's eligibility categories, because the intent of the law is to prohibit discrimination against all individuals with disabilities. *(See Sub-section #13 of this Section for information on Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.)*

What if I disagree with the local school district regarding the need for related services, or am not satisfied with the way services are being provided for my child?

Please refer to Sub-section #7 of this Section for detailed information on parents' rights and procedural safeguards. These safeguards establish procedures through which parents of students with disabilities can attempt to resolve differences with the local school district.

7. Procedural Provisions Under I.D.E.A.

What safeguards do parents have under IDEA?

The IDEA regulations include a number of safeguards to ensure that children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education. In addition to informing parents about these procedural safeguards, school districts must inform parents about the complaint procedures established by the Connecticut Department of Education.

Parents have a right to:

- receive prior written notice before the school district proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of special education services to their child. This is provided either at or after the PPT meeting where these issues were discussed.
- give or refuse consent before their child is evaluated or re-evaluated.
- obtain an independent educational evaluation at public expense if the parent disagrees with the school's evaluation, subject to the conditions described in Sub-section #3 of this Section.
- give or refuse consent before their child is provided with special education and related services for the first time.
- participate in any and all meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, and placement of their child in special education programs.
- inspect and review their child's educational records after notification to the public school district.

If a parent is not satisfied with any aspect of a child's special education program, there are several alternatives, referred to as due process, that can be pursued. A parent may request either mediation or a fair hearing on those matters that are in dispute (see below). While due process is pursued, the child must remain in his or her present educational placement, unless the parent and public school district agree otherwise.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary process that may be used to resolve disputes between school districts and the parents of a child with a disability. The law requires that the mediation process meet certain, specific conditions:

- Mediation must be voluntary on the part of both parties (parents and school district). In other words, both parties must agree to initiate mediation.
- Mediation may not be used by the school district to deny or delay a parent's right to a hearing or to deny any other right under IDEA.
- Mediation must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator trained in effective mediation techniques.
- Each session in the mediation process must be scheduled in a timely manner and held in a location convenient to the parties in the dispute.
- If a solution to the presenting problem is reached by the parties involved, it must be set forth in a written mediation agreement.
- Discussions that occur during the mediation process must be confidential; they may not be used as evidence in any future due process hearings or civil proceedings.

The State Department of Education must bear the cost of the mediation process. In addition, the State must maintain a list of individuals who are qualified mediators, knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of special education and related services.

If a mediator is not selected on a random (e.g., a rotation) basis from the list of mediators, then both parties must be involved in the selection of the mediator.

What is a due process hearing?

Unlike mediation, a due process hearing is a formal, legalistic procedure. Like mediation, a due process hearing may be initiated on any matter related to your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, or any aspect related to the provision of special education services. A due process hearing involves an impartial third party – called a hearing officer - who hears the evidence presented by both parties and issues a decision based on the evidence and the requirements of IDEA.

If there is a disagreement with the school district and parents want to request a due process hearing, they must do so within two years. It is best, however, to do it as soon as possible. As a part of its ongoing responsibilities under IDEA, the school district is required to give parents notice of the two-year deadline. In addition, the most recent revisions to the IDEA regulations require parents to provide the public school district with notice (which is to remain confidential) that they are requesting such a hearing.

Connecticut also offers an Advisory Opinion Process which is a streamlined hearing where the parties offer basic evidence and the testimony of witnesses. The hearing officer renders an oral opinion based on the information. An advisory opinion is non-binding. If you, or the public school district, disagree with the hearing officer's opinion, either of you may still engage in other forms of resolution, such as mediation or a due process hearing.

What should be in the notice I send my child's school to inform them of my request for a due process hearing?

The notice must include:

- the name of your child
- the address of your child's residence
- the name of the school your child is attending
- a description of the nature of the dispute, including facts relating to the problem
- a proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to you, as parents, at the time

The school must tell you of any free or low cost legal (and other relevant) services in the area. Note: The public school district also has the right to initiate a mediation or due process hearing if parents refuse to give consent to the initial evaluation or re-evaluation or the placement of the child in a private school.

A copy of the forms used by the State Department of Education for the safeguard procedures described above are included in Sub-section #15 of this Section.

What rights do parents have in the hearing process?

Both the parent and the public school district have the right to:

- be accompanied and advised by counsel (e.g., an attorney) or by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities (e.g., advocates).
- present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses.
- prohibit evidence from being introduced at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five business days before the hearing.
- obtain a written or, at the option of you as a parent, a tape recording of the hearing.
- obtain written or, at the option of you as a parent, a tape recording of the findings of fact and decisions.
- disclosure, at least five business days before the hearing, of evaluation information and recommendations that the public school district plans to present at the hearing.

As the parent, you have the following additional rights to:

- have your child at present at the hearing.
- have the hearing be conducted at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to you and your child.
- open the hearing to the public.
- have the record of the hearing and the findings of fact and decisions provided at no cost to you.

How does the hearing process work?

At the hearing, both parties present evidence to an impartial hearing officer who will make a decision on the matters at issue. The due process hearing must be completed and a copy of the decision mailed to all parties within 45 days of the request for hearing. The hearing officer may grant a specific extension of time at the request of either party involved in the due process procedure. The hearing officer's decision is considered final, unless one of the parties appeals the decision to court.

A hearing officer's decision may be appealed to either State Superior Court or Federal District Court. Either court must conduct an impartial review of the hearing, which involves examining the entire hearing record, ensuring that the procedures at the hearing were consistent with the requirements of due process, and seeking additional information, if necessary. If the court wishes, it may afford both parties the opportunity for oral or written arguments, or both. The judge must then make an independent decision and give a copy of the written findings of fact and the decision to each of the parties.

**"Everyone excels at
something in which
another fails."**

- Latin proverb

What is the Special Education Complaint Resolution Process?

This process is for complaints alleging that the public school district has violated a requirement of federal or state law regarding special education (a process which is separate from mediation and a due process hearing). If you wish to file a complaint you must do so by writing directly to the Complaint Resolution Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

The State must conduct an on-site investigation, if it determines that such an investigation is necessary. You must also be given the opportunity to submit additional information, either orally or in writing, about the allegations in your complaint. The state must review all relevant information and make an independent determination as to whether your school has violated or is violating a requirement of the law. The State must issue a written decision that addresses each of the allegations in the complaint and contains the findings of fact and conclusions, as well as the reasons for the Bureau's final decision.

8. Extended School Year Services

What are extended school year services?

Extended school year services (ESY) are education and related services beyond the normal school year (e.g., during vacations, over the summer) that are necessary to carry out a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). If determined (by the team at a PPT meeting) to be necessary and appropriate for the provision of a free, appropriate public education for a child, extended school year services must be provided at no cost to the parents by the school district.

Who is eligible to receive extended school year services?

Extended school year services must be provided to a child with a disability if the following conditions exist:

- the child is eligible for special education services.
- the child would regress considerably without an extended school year program.
- the child would require a substantial amount of time, after school starts again, to recoup losses due to an extended school break.

Also considered are the nature and severity of the child's disability, and areas of learning crucial to attaining the goals of self-sufficiency and independence.

How do I secure extended school year services for my child?

If you believe your child would benefit from extended school year services, begin planning early as the approval process can sometimes take several months. At the beginning of the school year collect documented evidence of your child's regression over the summer. This may include notes and evaluations by parents, teachers and others - from the end of the previous school year and the beginning of the current one - that describe your child's skills and behavior at both points in time. Regression recorded during shorter breaks could be used to support your child's need for educational services in the summer. This is not the only criteria the PPT should consider when determining whether or not your child needs ESY services. If your

child's disability is so severe that he/she makes little educational progress over a long period of time, ESY services may also be appropriate.

Remember that the need for extended school year services must be written into your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)!

What if the school system disagrees about the need for extended school year services?

If the school system disagrees, you should nevertheless make your request for an extended school year program at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting. This is very important if you wish to resolve the disagreement through dispute resolution procedures available to you, such as requesting an independent evaluation, mediation or a due process hearing. In order to have enough time to challenge the PPT decision before summer programming begins, it is important to bring your request for ESY services to the PPT well in advance of the summer.

(See Sub-section #7 of this Section Procedural Provisions under the IDEA, for detailed information about this process.)

If summer school is offered by the school district, can my child attend?

If summer school is offered to general education students, students with disabilities must also be given the opportunity to attend, and pay whatever fee, if any, that is charged the parents of general education students. When needed, reasonable accommodations must be provided for students with disabilities to allow for their participation, at no additional cost to parents.

Please note that general summer school does not necessarily equal extended school year services. The need for extended school year services, including specific goals and objectives and the setting in which services will be delivered, must be detailed in your child's IEP.

9. Discipline Procedures Under I.D.E.A.

What follows is a brief summary of relatively complex information in IDEA regarding discipline procedures for eligible students with disabilities. It is not a complete analysis of these procedures. If your child is facing expulsion and a change in placement, you are encouraged to consult an attorney for a more detailed description of your child's rights, and for guidance regarding these procedures.

What is a school suspension?

A suspension is an exclusion of a student from school for less than ten consecutive school days. Students may be suspended if they violate school rules or act dangerously toward themselves or others.

"Ideas are powerful things, requiring not a studious contemplation but an action, even if it is only an inner action. Their acquisition obligates each man in some way to change his life, even if it is only his inner life. They demand to be stood for. They dictate where a man must concentrate his vision. They determine his moral and intellectual priorities. They provide him with allies and make him enemies. In short, ideas impose an interest in their ultimate fate which goes far beyond the realm of the merely reasonable."

- Midge Decter, U.S. author, editor, social critic

What is the authority of school personnel applying discipline procedures such as suspension?

School personnel may remove any child with a disability for not more than ten consecutive school days, and for additional removals of not more than ten consecutive school days during the same school year for separate acts of misconduct.

Educational services need not be provided under IDEA to your child during the first ten-day suspension. After he/she has been suspended for more than ten school days during the same school year, the child's special education teacher, in consultation with other school personnel, determines the extent that services are necessary to enable the child to progress in both the general curriculum and in the goals/objectives of his or her IEP.

What is a change in placement?

A change in educational placement occurs when your child is expelled from school. An expulsion is exclusion from school for more than ten consecutive school days. A change in placement may also occur when your child is subjected to a series of lesser removals that accumulate to more than ten school days in a school year. Factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time your child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another are considered when determining if a change in placement has occurred. Repeated suspensions of a child with a disability might suggest that he/she is not receiving appropriate special education services.

What happens when a change in placement occurs or is proposed?

- First, the PPT is convened to conduct a functional behavioral assessment for the purpose of determining the causes of the problem behavior, and how it might be changed, by analyzing the events leading up to the misconduct.
- Second, based on the results of the functional behavioral assessment, revisions in your child's IEP may be made, and a behavioral intervention plan developed for the purpose of addressing your child's behavior(s). If your child already has a behavioral intervention plan, the PPT must meet to review the current plan and make modifications as necessary to address the behavior(s).

Can the school make a temporary change in placement?

School personnel may order a change in placement of your child to an appropriate Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to 45 days. This may be done

when your child carries or possesses a weapon, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance in school or at a school function. The school may also involve law enforcement agencies. A PPT meeting must be convened so a functional behavioral assessment plan may be developed or reviewed.

As soon as is practical after developing the functional behavioral assessment plan and completing the assessments required by the plan, the school district must convene a PPT meeting to develop an appropriate behavioral intervention plan to address the behavior(s).

How is the determination of the Interim Alternative Educational Setting made?

The PPT must determine the IAES to which school personnel may place your child for misconduct concerning weapons and illegal drugs. The setting must be selected so as to enable your child to continue to participate in the general curriculum, and to continue to receive the services and modifications that will address his/her IEP goals. In addition, the alternative setting must include services and modifications designed to prevent the behavior from recurring.

A hearing officer may place your child in an IAES if he/she determines that keeping your child in the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to your child or others.

What is a manifestation determination?

Manifestation determination is when the PPT meets to determine whether or not the misconduct is a manifestation of your child's disability. That is, the team looks at the relationship between your child's disability and the behavior subject to disciplinary action. The school district must conduct a manifestation determination review whenever they contemplate:

- Removing your child for behavior relating to weapons or illegal drugs
- Seeking an order from a hearing officer to place your child in an interim alternative educational setting for dangerous behavior (to self or others)

- Removing your child when such removal constitutes a change in placement for your child who has engaged in other behavior that violated any school rule or code of conduct that applies to all students.

As parents you must be notified immediately if the school district decides to change your child's placement for any of the reasons described above. Additionally, you must be notified and provided the procedural safeguards notice. The manifestation determination review must be conducted immediately, if possible, but never more than ten school days after the date of the decision to change your child's placement.

What if the PPT determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of my child's disability?

When it is determined that the behavior is not a manifestation of your child's disability, the school district may initiate disciplinary procedures applicable to all students. In making this decision, the PPT must determine the following:

- the IEP and placement were appropriate.
- supplementary aids, services, and behavioral interventions were provided in accordance with the IEP.
- your child understood his/her behavior and could control it.

What rights do I have as a parent if I disagree with the decision of the PPT?

If you disagree with a determination that your child's behavior was not a manifestation of his/her disability, or with any other decision regarding placement for disciplinary reasons, you may initiate an expedited due process hearing.

If you request an expedited due process hearing to challenge your child's placement in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES), or the manifest determination decision, he/she will remain in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer, or until the expiration of the 45 day time period allowed for IAES, whichever comes first.

What is the authority of the hearing officer?

The hearing officer may order a change in placement for your child to an appropriate interim setting for not more than 45 days. In order to do this the hearing officer, in an expedited due process hearing, must first determine that:

- the school has sufficiently demonstrated that maintaining the current placement of your child is substantially likely to result in injury to your child or others
- reasonable steps to minimize the likelihood of harm have been taken
- the current IEP is appropriate, and
- the interim setting allows your child to participate in the general curriculum, continue to receive IEP services, and provides services to ensure the behavior does not reoccur

"Healthy parenting is nothing if not a process of empowerment.

As we help to raise our children's self esteem, we also increase their personal power. When we encourage them to be confident, self-reliant, self-directed, and responsible individuals, we are giving them power."

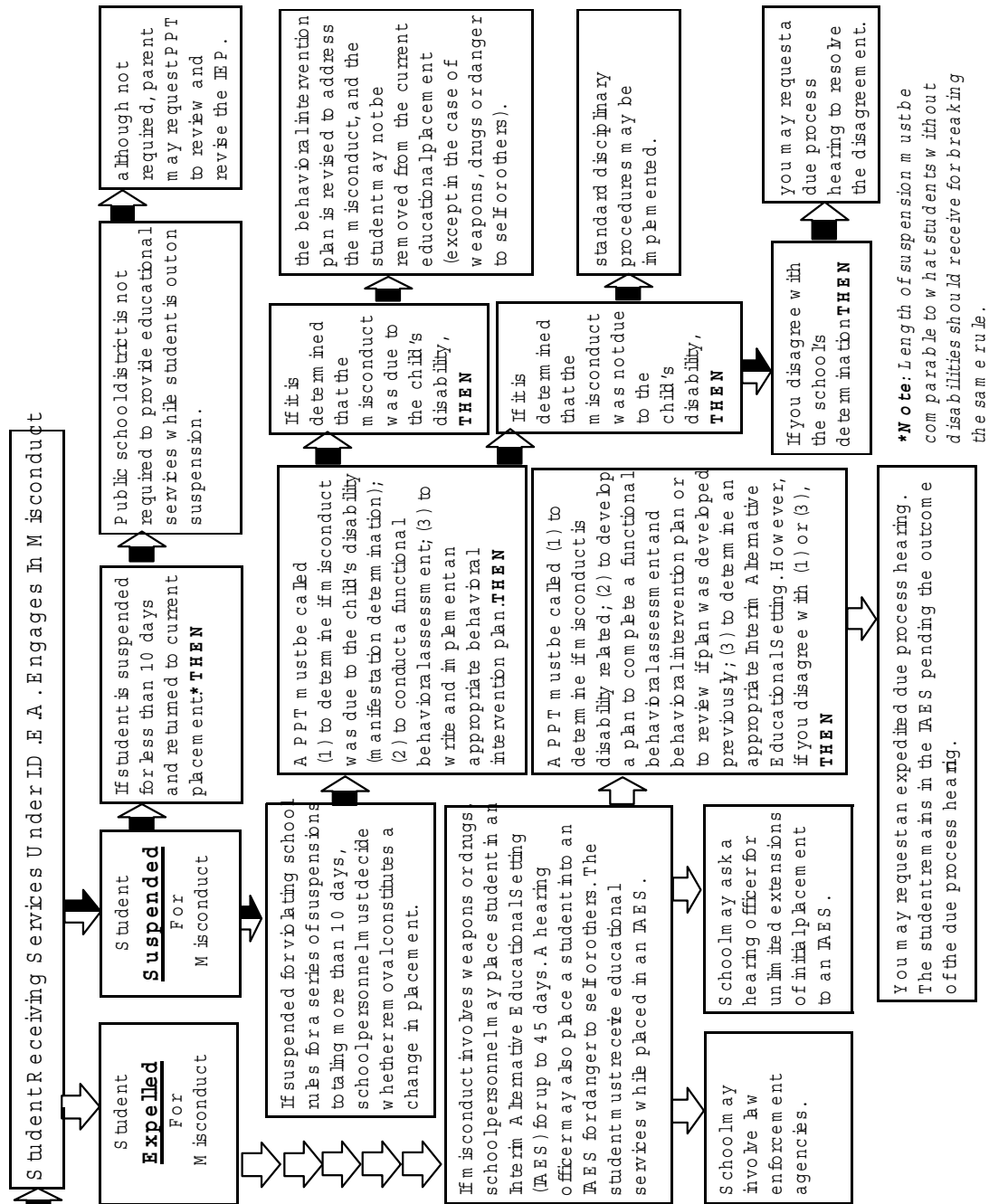
- Louise Hart,
U.S. psychologist, educator

Can the school district request an extension of the 45-day placement in an IAES?

Yes. The school district may ask the hearing officer for an extension of the initial alternative placement for an additional 45 days. There is no limit to the number of extensions they may request.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 31

Discipline Procedures for Suspension or Expulsion



10. Transition Services

What are transition services?

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promote a student's movement from public school to post-school activities. Transition goals and objectives are written into the student's IEP. Transition services provide a student (in the last years of school) with experiences and opportunities to prepare for employment, post secondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation.

Transition services are based on each child's needs, taking into account his/her preferences and interests, and include, as appropriate:

- instruction.
- related services.
- community experiences.
- development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.
- acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

When must school districts begin providing transition services to my child with a disability?

The IEP for each student, beginning after his/her 13th birthday (and at a younger age, if determined appropriate by the Planning and Placement Team) must include a statement of "transition service needs". This typically occurs at the PPT meeting following your child's 13th birthday.

After the student's 15th birthday (and at a younger age if determined to be appropriate by the PPT), more specific goals and objectives will be identified to prepare him/her for post school life.

At age 16, the PPT will identify, if appropriate, any adult agencies, services or programs that may provide assistance to the student during and/or after he/she leaves high school.

Who will determine what transition services are needed for my child?

The IDEA regulations are very clear as to who should participate in the transition services planning process. In addition to the usual participants of the Planning and Placement Team (e.g., parents, the student's classroom teacher, a school administrator, Pupil Personnel staff), the school district is required to invite the student and representatives of any other agencies that are likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to any meeting where transition services will be discussed.

It is particularly important that your child be involved in this process. He/ she should be invited to all PPT meetings after his/her 13th birthday.

How does the team determine what transition services my child needs?

The coordinated set of activities developed must be based on your child's individual needs, taking into account his/her preferences and interests. If your child chooses not to attend the IEP meeting, the school must take other steps to ensure that his/her preferences and interests are identified and considered. In addition to the above, a variety of assessment tools should be used to determine what transition services are needed, and which activities would best meet the identified needs listed in the IEP. Some areas that should be considered when developing transition goals and objectives are: post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

Whether the student receives such services *cannot* be based on the availability of resources. The school district must provide the transition services that were identified as appropriate in the IEP.

Where will transition services be provided?

IDEA does not specify where transition services should be provided. However, it is important to note that the definition of transition services states that the coordinated

set of activities designed by the team "promotes the student's movement to post-school life", and includes instruction and community experience.

Who will provide the transition services to my child?

The local school district is responsible under IDEA to ensure the implementation of appropriate transition services. They may contract with providers in the community and/or collaborate with other agencies that can provide resources. Should an agency fail to provide the agreed upon services, the school district is required to reconvene a PPT meeting to develop other strategies for meeting the transition objectives stated in your child's IEP.

What skills can we expect my child to acquire while participating in his/her own transition planning?

Self determination and self advocacy skills are relevant both now and in your child's future. Fundamental skills that will serve him/her well in a wide variety of adult situations include:

- the ability to assess him/herself, including skills, abilities, and needs associated with his/her disability
- awareness of the accommodations he/she needs because of his/her disability
- knowledge of his/her civil rights through legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (*see Sub-section #13 of this Section for additional information*)
- self advocacy skills necessary to express his/her needs in the workplace, in educational institutions, and in community life.

These skills will provide students with a strong base for participation in the development of their own transition planning, and for managing the many aspects of adult life that will become important after high school.

11. Assistive Technology

What are assistive technology devices and services?

An assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities.

Examples of assistive technology devices range from simple, low technology items such as specialized drinking cups or laminated pictures for communication, to the most sophisticated high technology tools such as computers, motorized wheelchairs, and augmentative communication devices.

An assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Ensuring that a child accesses and benefits from needed equipment requires the provision of a number of services. The law places equal importance on the provision of the assistive technology device(s) and the services the child will need to use the device(s) effectively.

Assistive technology services include:

- the evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in his/her customary environment.
- purchasing, leasing or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices for children with disabilities.
- selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, retaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.
- coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
- training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family.
- training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of children with disabilities.

How do I know if my child is eligible to receive assistive technology supports?

All students, ages 3 through 21, who are eligible to receive special education and related services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be provided with assistive technology, if appropriate, as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Whenever a student's IEP is developed, reviewed or revised, the PPT must consider whether assistive technology is needed.

What does the law require school systems to provide?

The IDEA requires that local school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for eligible children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 years. As part of the FAPE requirement, assistive technology may be provided as special education, a related service, or as a supplementary aid and service.

"Free" means that all aspects of a child's special education program must be provided at no cost to parents. Therefore, schools cannot force parents to pay for assistive technology devices and services that are required as part of their child's IEP. In addition, parents can not be required to use personal insurance to fund an educationally necessary device.

Who owns assistive technology devices?

If the public school system pays for the device, the school district owns it. If the device was purchased through Medicaid or private insurance, the equipment belongs to the student.

Is assistive technology available to my child with a disability who is under age three?

Yes. The Birth to Three System requires that assistive technology be provided, if necessary, to meet the developmental needs of a child with a disability, ages 0 – 3 years. The need for assistive technology devices is determined through an evaluation process. *(See Sub-section #12 of this Section for information on Birth to Three services.)*

Unlike the requirement that school districts pay the total cost of assistive technology for school aged children, the Birth to Three funding guidelines require that third party funding be explored first. This means that other funding options, such as insurance and recycled devices, will be explored first. The Birth to Three System is, therefore, considered the "payer of last resort".

Who owns assistive technology devices provided through the Birth to Three System?

Under the Birth to Three System, if the parent's insurance, or other third party funding, pays for more than 50% of the device, the parents retain total ownership of that device. If Birth to Three funds pay for more than 50% of the device's cost, that technology is owned by the Birth to Three system.

Is assistive technology available to students who are not eligible to receive services under the IDEA?

Students who do not qualify for special education under IDEA, but are determined to have a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, are eligible for accommodations that may include assistive technology devices and/or services. Additionally, students with disabilities may also be entitled to assistive technology as reasonable accommodations to their disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (*See Sub-section #13 of this Section for information on the ADA.*)

For additional information on assistive technology, please refer to *Guidelines for Assistive Technology* (developed by the CT State Department of Education and the CT Birth to Three System) available from the Special Education Resource Center at 860-632-1485 or www.serc.rh.edu/

12. Birth to Three Services

Are any services available for my child with a disability before he/she reaches school age?

Yes, the Birth to Three System is a state and federally funded program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers (up to age three) who have disabilities or developmental delays.

Services to eligible children are operated by, under contracts with, or through an interagency agreement with the lead agency in Connecticut – the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR). [Note: DMR serves as lead agency for the Birth to Three program but a child does not have to have mental retardation to be eligible for services under the Birth to Three program.]

Who is eligible to receive Birth to Three services?

Eligible children are those who are experiencing a significant developmental delay in one or more of the following areas:

- cognitive development
- physical development
- communication development
- social or emotional development
- adaptive skills

Children who are diagnosed as having a physical or mental condition - such as Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Autism, Blindness, or Deafness - that has a high probability of resulting in a significant developmental delay may also be eligible for services.

How does this system work for my child?

The Birth to Three System can help evaluate children's needs and provide services for children and families through a statewide network of providers. Once a child is evaluated, a team of people, including the parent(s), develops an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that identifies the services best suited for the child/family.

Who pays for these services?

First of all, you must know that your child will receive the services he/she needs regardless of your ability to pay. If you have a health insurance plan of any type, and you allow the Birth to Three System to bill them for reimbursement of services, you will not be asked for any other contribution.

"The family is both the fundamental unit of society as well as the root of culture. It represents a child's initial source of unconditional love and acceptance and provides lifelong connectedness with others. The family is the first setting in which socialization takes place and where children learn to live with mutual respect for one another. A family is where a child learns to display affection, control his temper, and pick up his toys. Finally, a family is a perpetual source of encouragement, advocacy, assurance, and emotional refueling that empowers a child to venture with confidence into the greater world and to become all that he can be."

- Marianne Neifert, U.S.pediatrician,
professor and author

You will be asked to pay for Birth to Three services/supports only if:

- you have no health insurance or you decide not to allow the Birth to Three System to access your health insurance or Medicaid.

and

- your gross annual family income is greater than \$45,000 (families with high incomes will be asked to pay according to a sliding fee scale based on income)

What happens to these services after my child reaches age three?

Ask your Birth to Three Service coordinator or other staff to help you understand the changes that will occur as your child transitions out of the Birth to Three System.

When your child reaches age two and a half contact your local public school district (with assistance from Birth to Three staff), and refer your child to them for an eligibility evaluation to determine whether her or she is eligible for preschool special education. Schedule a transition planning meeting with the public school district at least ninety days before your child's third birthday. You may also request that a representative from Birth to Three, who knows your child well, attend this meeting with you.

You are encouraged to give permission for Birth to Three staff to share pertinent information about your child with the public school district. This will enable them to better understand your child, his/her unique needs, and the services the school district will need to provide to address those needs.

How do I find out more about Birth to Three services?

To initiate the evaluation process, or for more detailed information, parents may call: Birth to Three Infoline at 1-800-505-7000, or contact them at <http://www.birth23.org>, their web site address.

13. Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are federal laws that protect children and adults from discrimination based on the presence of a disability. They impact children in a number of ways.

How does Section 504 protect my child?

Section 504 prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities. Almost all public schools and all town programs are covered by Section 504, as are services provided by many other state and local agencies. Section 504 requires that individuals with disabilities should have the same opportunities to participate in school and community events as do those individuals without disabilities. In other words, children with disabilities cannot be denied the right to participate in activities such as field trips, extra-curricular activities, recreation programs, and summer camps that are run by either the town or the school system.

What is the definition of disability under Section 504?

Under Section 504, a child's condition is considered a disability if it substantially limits a major life activity. Learning is considered a major life activity, as is seeing, hearing, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, speaking, and breathing. The list is not an exhaustive one, but the child must have a physical or mental impairment of some kind, that is also substantially limiting, to be covered. If a child's disability is not covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it might be covered under Section 504.

Does Section 504 apply to my child's school program?

Yes. School systems cannot deny children with disabilities access to any programs that are available to students without disabilities. This obligation applies to extra-curricular activities, such as field trips, dances, and school clubs, as well as academic programs.

What services is my child entitled to under Section 504?

Your child is entitled to an evaluation to determine the extent of his/her disability and to identify and provide accommodations that may be required for the child to benefit from educational programming. Accommodations vary depending on the needs of the student, and include, but are not limited to, simplifying instructions for class assignments and homework; using behavioral management techniques; modifying the way tests are given; using tape recorders or other forms of assistive technology; using one-on-one tutorials; assigning an aide to the classroom; and providing modifications for non-academic time such as lunchroom, recess, field trips, and physical education classes. The list of accommodations possible is not exhaustive, and must be tailored to the needs of the individual student.

How are decisions made about the services my child will receive under Section 504?

Planning meetings must be held during which the child's educational needs and educational program are discussed. The individualized program designed for a student with a disability must be described clearly in writing. Parents must be provided notice about the school's obligation to provide for students with disabilities who are eligible for services under Section 504, and should be included in planning meetings.

What can I do if I am not happy with the services my child is receiving?

School systems must have procedures in place to allow parents to challenge identification, evaluation, or educational placement decisions. These safeguards include being given notice of parental rights and having the opportunity to examine relevant records. Parents also have a right to an impartial hearing, to be represented by counsel, and to a review of the impartial hearing decision. If you request a hearing and remain unsatisfied with the result, consult an attorney knowledgeable in school issues at once. If your child is protected under Section 504, write and ask your school system for a copy of your rights under that important federal law. Parents may also contact the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) in Middletown by telephone: (860) 632-1485.

How does the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) apply to my child?

Like Section 504, the ADA protects children and adults with disabilities from discrimination based on disability. Unlike the Section 504, the ADA covers all public and private entities, whether they receive federal funds or not. Children with disabilities are therefore protected under two federal laws when encountering discrimination by public schools, town government, and state agencies.

There are no major new requirements under the ADA that are substantially different than the requirements under Section 504. There can be no exclusion from programs nor denial of services based on the presence of a disability, just like under Section 504. All school programs and town services must provide access to any activities they offer, must make modifications to policies and practices that discriminate against individuals with disabilities, and must provide auxiliary aides and services when needed. The free, appropriate public education requirements in Section 504 are also incorporated into the ADA.

What is the definition of disability under the ADA?

Like Section 504, a child's condition is considered a disability under the ADA if it substantially limits a major life activity. Learning is considered a major life activity, as is seeing, hearing, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, speaking, and breathing. The list is not an exhaustive one, but the child must have a physical or mental impairment of some kind, that is also substantially limiting, to be covered.

Does the ADA cover private businesses?

Yes. There are two parts of the ADA that are relevant. Title II, noted above, prohibits discrimination based on disability by state agencies and town governments. Title III prohibits discrimination by private businesses.

The ADA prohibits private businesses, including day care centers, amusements parks, museums and doctors' offices, from discriminating against children and adults with disabilities. There can be no denial of services, and services cannot be offered to individuals with disabilities that are inferior to the services provided people without

disabilities. Integration is a major theme of the ADA, and while programs and services may be offered just for individuals with disabilities, private businesses may not prevent such individuals from participating in the programs made available for persons without disabilities.

How much can I ask my school system, my town, or a private agency or business to do to accommodate my child's disability?

Accommodations must be provided unless to do so would impose an undue burden on the entity involved. If an entity does not provide the accommodation, it must be able to show a significant difficulty or expense when compared to the overall resources available. A town department or state agency must do more, for example, than a small business. Also accommodations do not need to be provided if they require the entity to fundamentally alter the way they conduct their business or operate their programs.

What do I do if my child is discriminated against due to a disability?

If the discriminating agency is a school or a town department, the ADA requires that there be both an ADA Coordinator and an internal grievance procedure. Should you choose, you may file a formal complaint with the ADA Coordinator and follow the grievance procedure. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice:

U. S. Department of Justice
Office on the ADA – Civil Rights Division
P.O. Box 66738
Washington, DC 20035-6738
1-800-514-0301 (voice) - 1-800-514-0383 (TDD)
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

If the grieving party is a private business, you should start by contacting the owner or manager of the business. If that approach is unsuccessful, you may file a complaint with the Department of Justice, or seek relief in federal court. While you should have an attorney to file a lawsuit, you may file a complaint on your own (although it is advisable to consult with an attorney or someone knowledgeable about the ADA first).

**"You gain strength, courage
and confidence by every
experience in which you really
stop to look fear in the face.
You are able to say to yourself
'I have lived through this horror.
I can take the next thing
that comes along'.
You must do the thing you
think you cannot do."**

- Eleanor Roosevelt

An education related ADA or Section 504 complaint may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education in Boston.

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
Room 701
J.W. McCormack Building
Post Office and Courthouse Square
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 223-9662

If you have the financial resources, you may also file a lawsuit in federal court.

14. Important Terms

ACCOMMODATIONS. Techniques, modifications, devices, and materials that allow students with disabilities to complete school or work tasks with greater ease and effectiveness. Examples include spellcheckers, tape recorders, and expanded time for completing assignments.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT). Equipment that enhances the ability of students with disabilities to be more efficient and successful. Word prediction software, augmentative communication devices, and talking calculators are examples of AT.

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

(ADD). A disability characterized by a severe difficulty in focusing and maintaining attention. Often leads to learning and behavior problems at home, school, and work.

**"Power can be taken,
but not given. The
process of the taking is
empowerment in itself."**

BRAIN INJURY. The physical damage to brain tissue or structure that occurs before, during, or after birth that is verified by medical examinations and/or x-rays, rather than by observation of performance. When caused by an accident, the damage may be called Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

- Gloria Steinem,
U.S. feminist, writer, editor

COLLABORATION. A program model in which a special education teacher works with the general classroom teacher to help a student with a disability be successful in a regular classroom.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION. An instructional approach to academic subjects that emphasizes the use of carefully sequenced steps that include demonstration, modeling, guided practice, and independent application.

DYSLEXIA. A disability characterized by a severe difficulty in understanding or using one or more areas of language, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and spelling.

LEARNING MODALITIES. Approaches to assessment or instruction stressing the auditory (hearing), visual (seeing), or tactile (hands-on) methods for learning that are dependent upon individual needs.

LEARNING STRATEGY APPROACHES. Instructional approaches that focus on efficient ways to learn, rather than on curriculum. Includes specific techniques for organizing, actively interacting with material, memorizing, and monitoring any content or subject.

MINIMAL BRAIN DYSFUNCTION (MBD). A medical and psychological term originally used to refer to the learning difficulties that seemed to result from identified or presumed damage to the brain. Reflects a medical, rather than educational or vocational orientation.

MULTISENSORY LEARNING. An instructional approach that combines auditory, visual, and tactile elements into a learning task. Tracing sandpaper numbers while saying a number fact aloud would be a multisensory learning activity.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION. A series of tasks that allow observation of performance that is presumed to be related to the intactness of brain function.

PERCEPTUAL HANDICAP. A disability characterized by difficulty in accurately processing, organizing, and discriminating among visual, auditory, or tactile information. A person with a perceptual handicap may say that "cap/cup" sound the same or that "b" and "d" look the same. However, glasses or hearing aids do not necessarily indicate a perceptual handicap.

PRE-REFERRAL PROCESS. A procedure in which special education and regular classroom teachers develop trial strategies to help a student who is showing difficulty in learning remain in the regular classroom.

RESOURCE PROGRAM. A program model in which a student with a learning disability (LD) is in a regular classroom for most of each day, but also receives regularly scheduled individual services in a specialized resource classroom.

SELF ADVOCACY. The development of specific skills and understandings that enable children and adults with disabilities to recognize their rights, speak up for themselves, deal with the attitudes of others, and pursue their own futures.

SPECIFIC LANGUAGE DISABILITY.

A disability characterized by a severe difficulty in some aspect of listening, speaking, reading, writing, or spelling, while skills in the other areas are age-appropriate. Also called Specific Language Learning Disability.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY.

The official term used in federal legislation to refer to difficulty in certain areas of learning, rather than in all areas of learning. Synonymous with the term "learning disabilities".

TRANSITION. A term commonly used to refer to the change from secondary school to post secondary programs, work, and independent living typical of young adults. Also used to describe other periods of major change such as from early childhood to school or from more specialized to mainstreamed settings.

"Don't be discouraged by a failure. It can be a positive experience. Failure is, in a sense, the highway to success, inasmuch as every discovery of what is false leads us to seek earnestly after what is true, and every fresh experience points out some form of error which we shall afterwards carefully avoid."

- John Keats

15. Model Letters

MODEL LETTER #1 ***Request for PPT or Placement Review***

Date

Name of Special Education Director
School District
Address

Re: Child's full name
Date of birth

Dear _____,

We (or I), the parent(s) of (child's name), who currently attends (name of school) in the (grade or type of special education class) have some concerns about our (my) child's (IEP or placement). We (or I), therefore, request a PPT (or placement) review on (date and time).

Please contact us (me) to confirm this meeting date or, if necessary, to schedule another date and time that is mutually convenient.

We (I) would appreciate having the following staff persons attend the meeting:
(list names and titles here)

Sincerely,

Your name(s)
Phone number

Copies: Principal, Superintendent, child's record

MODEL LETTER #2
Request for Initial Evaluation for Special Education & Related Services

Date

Name of Special Education Director
School District
Address

Re: Child's full name
Date of birth

Dear _____,

We (or I) the parent(s) of (child's name), who currently attends (name of school) in the (grade), have concerns about our (my) child's educational progress. To date the following attempts have been made by the school to assist our (my) child: (list what steps the school has taken)

We (or I), therefore, request that our (my) child be evaluated to determine whether he/she is eligible to receive special education and related services under IDEA. We are available to attend a meeting to provide our authorization for the above evaluation on (date and time) at the school. Please contact us to confirm this meeting or, if necessary, to schedule the meeting at another mutually convenient date and time. We would appreciate having the following staff people attend the meeting: (list the names and titles here)

Sincerely,

Your name(s)
Phone number

copies: Principal, Superintendent, child's record

MODEL LETTER #3
Request for Independent Evaluation

Date

Name of Special Education Director
School District
Address

Re: Child's Name
Date of birth

Dear _____:

We (or I), the parent(s) of (child's name), who currently attends (name of school) in the (grade or type of special education class) are not in agreement with the school district's recent evaluation of our child for the following reasons (list reasons):

We (or I), therefore, inform you of our intent to get an independent evaluation of our (or my) child, at the school district's expense. Please contact us (or me) upon receipt of this letter so we may discuss qualified evaluators in our area.

Sincerely,

Your name(s)
Phone number

copies: Principal, Superintendent, child's record

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 52

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL SERVICES
DUE PROCESS UNIT
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
FAX# (860) 807-2049

Request for Mediation

We request a mediation concerning _____, _____
(name of student) (date of birth)

_____ who is currently within the jurisdiction of
(address of residence of student)

the _____ and attends _____
(school district) (name of the school the student attends)

_____ Parent Signature	_____ Date	_____ District Signature	_____ Date
---------------------------	---------------	-----------------------------	---------------

_____ Telephone #	_____ Fax #	_____ Telephone #	_____ Fax #
----------------------	----------------	----------------------	----------------

The date of the IEP meeting at which the parties failed to reach agreement: _____

Description of the nature of the issues in dispute, including related facts:

Proposed resolution of the issues to the extent known and available at this time.

Please provide three mutually agreeable dates for the mediation which will be held within 30 days of this request. From these dates one will be selected for the convening of the mediation.

_____, _____, _____

Please forward to the above address and, as appropriate, the parents or the school district.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 53

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL SERVICES
DUE PROCESS UNIT
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
FAX# (860) 807-2049

Request for Impartial Special Education Hearing

I request an impartial hearing concerning _____, _____,
(name of student) (date of birth)
_____ who is currently within the jurisdiction of
(address of residence of student)
the _____ and attends _____
(school district) (name of the school the student attends)

Print Name Signature Date

Telephone # Fax #

The date of the IEP meeting at which the parties failed to reach agreement: _____

Description of the nature of the issues in dispute, including related facts:

Proposed resolution of the issues to the extent known and available at this time.

Please forward to the above address and, as appropriate, the parents or the school district.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 54

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL SERVICES
DUE PROCESS UNIT
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
FAX# (860) 807-2049

Request For Advisory Opinion

We request an advisory opinion. We understand both parties must agree to an advisory opinion and we are required to pursue an advisory opinion prior to a hearing.

Parent Signature

Date

District Signature

Date

Two mutually agreeable dates for the advisory opinion. From these dates one will be selected for the advisory opinion.

_____, _____

Please forward to the above address and, as appropriate, the parents or the school district.

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section III. I.D.E.A.
page 55

Replace this page with
"SERVICES AT A GLANCE"
(Birth to Adult)

Section IV. Medical Needs and Related Services

State Agencies

The **State Department of Public Health** (DPH) operates the **Children with Special Health Care Needs** (CSHCN) program to serve children with disabilities and those with chronic health care needs who meet certain income guidelines. The program is administered in collaboration with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford (860-545-9230, 1-877-743-5516 toll free) and Yale Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs in New Haven (203-737-5462, 1-888-842-1937 toll free). Both centers contract with community-based facilities throughout the state to increase access for families who do not reside in Hartford or New Haven.

Under CSHCN, diagnostic and therapeutic services, as well as certain therapies and equipment are provided to Connecticut children under the age of 18 who have or are at risk of acquiring a disability.

Participation for individuals with Cystic Fibrosis is not restricted by age limits. Case management and coordination of services are provided by selected qualified providers or agencies. Hospitalization and routine pediatric care are not covered by the program. Eligibility is determined by financial and medical criteria.

**"In periods where there
is no leadership, society
stands still. Progress occurs
when courageous, skillful
leaders seize the opportunity
to change things for the
better."**

- Harry S. Truman

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section IV. Medical Needs and Related Services
page 2

DPH's **Child Development Program** offers case coordination, developmental assessments and in-depth evaluations of infants and preschool children who are showing physical or psychological problems in their early development. Children from birth to 6 years who have developmental problems are eligible for the program. There is no fee in most clinics. Others charge a modest fee based on a sliding scale.

In addition, DPH also offers support services to families who have experienced the death of a child due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and monitors the mandated screening by birthing hospitals for eight disorders including hearing loss in newborns. For additional information on any services available through the Department of Public Health, call (860) 509-8074 or visit the DPH Internet site at www.dph.state.ct.us.

The ***State Department of Social Services*** (DSS) also offers programs that may be of assistance to families who have a child with a disability.

- The **HUSKY (Health Care for Uninsured Kids & Youth) Program** is a comprehensive health care benefit package for Connecticut children up to age 19. For many families, HUSKY will be free. Other families will pay a monthly premium cost based on family size and income. HUSKY A is for services under the traditional Medicaid program. HUSKY B is for higher income families. For children with intensive physical or behavioral health care needs, HUSKY PLUS may be able to help. As of January 1, 2001 the state expanded the HUSKY program to include parents with incomes up to 150% of the federal poverty level. For more information about any of the HUSKY programs, call toll free 1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759).
- The **Medicaid Program** – also known as Title XIX - is a federal program administered by the State of Connecticut that provides medical coverage for eligible participants. Eligibility is largely based on income limits. The rules and regulations of the program are extremely complex. Anyone needing help with paying past, current, or future medical expenses is encouraged to apply.
- DSS also offers a **Medicaid Waiver** for children whose family income exceeds the limits for Title XIX eligibility. This waiver is also referred to as the Model Waiver, the Katie Becket Waiver, and the Deeming Waiver. To be eligible for the waiver, the care required by the child must be "skilled", meaning the services of a nurse or home health aide are necessary. In addition to being able to benefit

from all Medicaid services, case management support is also provided. The major limitation is that the cost of the care received must be less than the cost of a skilled nursing facility or an ICF/MR (Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Mental Retardation) facility. Currently all slots in the waiver are taken and there is a waiting list of several years. The state legislature has considered funding additional slots but no changes have taken place to date.

- **Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)** - previously known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC - offers a Child Care Assistance Program that provides financial and medical assistance to eligible families. This program, temporary in nature and funded by the state and federal government, is designed to enable very poor families to provide basic necessities for children with disabilities up to the age of eighteen. Many families eligible for TFA are also eligible for food stamps and energy assistance.
- **Family Support Grant Program** provides grants to help families maintain children with disabilities in their homes by helping defray the extraordinary expenses involved.

There are a number of other programs and services offered to individuals and families through the state Department of Social Services for which you may be eligible. These include the **State Rental Assistance Program (RAP)**, the **Section 8 Certificate and Voucher Program**, the **Energy and Weatherization Assistance Programs**, the **Eviction Prevention Program**, the **State Supplement for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (State Supplement)**, and the **Food Stamp program**. Contact the nearest DSS Office for more information (see the Blue Pages of your telephone book under "Connecticut" for the nearest DSS Office listing), or visit the DSS web site at www.dss.state.ct.us.

The ***State Department of Children and Families*** (DCF) offers a variety of family support services. **Health care advocates** are located in all regional DCF offices and are available to provide on-site assistance and training in dealing with managed care issues. Foster parents are one of the targeted audiences. **Parent Support Centers**, located throughout the state, are supported by DCF and provide parenting classes, support groups, book and toy lending libraries, drop in programs, newsletters and special family events. **Early childhood programs** are funded for pre-school children and families who are at risk of abuse or neglect or have developmental delays. For

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section IV. Medical Needs and Related Services
page 4

more information about the programs offered to families by DCF call 860-550-6302, or visit their web site at www.state.ct.us.dcf.

The ***State Department of Mental Retardation*** (DMR) offers a number of services to children and adults with mental retardation. Among the offerings is a Medicaid waiver, referred to as the **Home and Community Based Services Waiver**. It is one of two waivers available in Connecticut to families who have children with disabilities whose family income is over the income limits for Title XIX. [The other waiver is the DSS waiver noted above.] A child who has mental retardation must be accepted for DMR services, be eligible for institutional placement, and receive at least one of five services from DMR (i.e., respite care, habilitation services, environmental accessibility options, specialized medical equipment, or family training) to be eligible for DMR's waiver. A case manager will assist the family in completing the Medicaid application. Typically the child requires a skilled level of care in the home (e.g., nursing care or care by a home health aide) and the cost of the care can not exceed the cost of an out of home placement for the child. Once determined eligible, the child may access the full range of health care services covered under Medicaid. Call 860-418-6000 to obtain the telephone number for the DMR office nearest you, or visit the DMR web site at www.dmr.state.ct.us.

Other Services and Sources of Assistance

The ***Connecticut Primary Care Association*** offers a **Pediatric AIDS Program** for families in the cities of Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Stamford. They also assist families who live outside Hartford but get their pediatric HIV medical care at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Family support and case management services are provided. Call 860-232-3319 for more information.

At the ***local level*** there may be additional resources available to families. Many places of worship have special funds set up to provide financial and medical assistance to families. The same is true for many town governments. The state's larger school systems have school based health centers that provide a variety of support services, including mental health and dental care services. Make phone calls, ask your friends and neighbors – you might be surprised at what you will find right in your community.

Two federal laws are in place to protect families from loss of medical benefits. **The Health Insurance and Portability Act of 1996** protects individuals who are moving between employers (i.e., changing jobs). To make the transition smooth, and to avoid loss of coverage, the new employer's plan must pick up coverage when the old employer's coverage stops, provided the employee was covered for at least the last 63 days under the old employer's plan. Employees may not be excluded from coverage by the new employer based on health status, including claims experience, receipt of health care, medical history, genetic information, and disability. For more information about your insurance rights under this act, call the Health Care Finance Administration at (410) 786-1565. You may also check out the following Internet site: www.hipaa.hcfa.gov.

"Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them – every day begin the task anew."

– Saint Francis DeSales

The second federal law, **COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985)**, requires employers to offer a temporary extension of health care coverage to ex-employees who have terminated employment with the employer or who meet certain other "qualifying events". To get more information about the COBRA protections call the U.S. Department of Labor at 617-565-9600, or check out their Internet site at www.dol.gov/dol/pwba/public/pubs/cobrafs.htm.

Section V.

Services for Adults with Disabilities

The **Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)** provides comprehensive, confidential services for persons of all ages who are legally blind, including children with visual impairments. A person is legally blind if central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses or if the visual field is restricted to an angle of 20 degrees or less. Services include: counseling and referral; preschool, elementary, secondary education; vocational rehabilitation; rehabilitation teaching; orientation and mobility instruction; small business enterprise; technology evaluation and training on adaptive equipment; employment options within an industrial setting; industries and sales; support groups; confidential registry of persons who are blind; prevention; consultation; and public education. To request services or information contact the agency at 184 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, Connecticut 06095 - Telephone: 1-800-842-4510 (Voice/TDD) or Hartford (860) 602-4000. The BESB Internet site is at www.besb.state.ct.us.

The **Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI)** serves persons with hearing disabilities. CDHI provides interpreting services, job counseling and placement, personal and family counseling, information and referral services, and research and advocacy. For more information, contact the CDHI at 1245 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut 06107. General information: (860) 561-0196, or 1-800-708-6796; Interpreting services: (860) 566-7414. For emergency interpreting services after hours, call (860) 242-7698. Voice, TDD or telecommunication relay service may be used for all numbers. The CDHI Internet site is at www.state.ct.us/cdhi.

The **State Department of Mental Retardation (DMR)** coordinates and oversees services for people of all ages with mental retardation. These include: comprehensive

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section V. Services for Adults with Disabilities
Page 2

case management; early intervention for infants and toddlers; community-based residential programs; supported living; job training and supported employment; respite and other family support; and habilitative day programs. Services and referrals to community resources are available through five regions. To find the telephone number for your region, call (860) 418-6000 (Voice), or (860) 725-3826 (TDD). Also visit the DMR Internet site at www.dmr.state.ct.us.

The **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services** (BRS) is a part of the State Department of Social Services. The Bureau oversees the following programs:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**, which helps individuals with physical and mental disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. Information on BRS services is available by contacting the BRS central office at (860) 424-4844 or by calling the toll-free number, 1-800-537-2549.
- **Independent Living** supports a statewide network of community-based, consumer-controlled centers for independent living which provide services to assist persons with disabilities to live more independently. Call (860) 424-4878 or toll free at 1-800-537-2549 for more information.
- **Connecticut Tech Act Project** is a program whose goal is to assure that all citizens with disabilities have access to necessary assistive technology (AT). This is accomplished through public awareness, systems change activities, training, advocacy and services to individuals. Call 1-800-842-4524 or (860) 424-4881. You may also find more information at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Internet site at www.dss.state.ct.us/svcs/rehab.htm.

The **State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services** (DMHAS) provides services for people with a psychiatric disabilities or addiction disorders, or both, through a coordinated array of services. DMHAS services individuals 18 years or older with chronic psychiatric disabilities or addiction disorders, who live at or below the poverty level.

More information about DMHAS programs can be obtained by calling the Office of the Commissioner, DMHAS at 1-800-446-7348 or the Connecticut Clearinghouse at 1-800-842-4424. Also visit the DMHAS Internet site at www.dmhas.state.ct.us.

The ***State Department of Economic and Community Development*** (DECD) offers a variety of technical and financial assistance programs, including programs for construction and rehabilitation of low and moderate income housing. DECD also funds the grants and loans for accessibility program that provides low-interest loans and grants to qualified owners or tenants to make housing accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. Call the Corporation for Independent Living (860) 563-6011 for more information.

The ***State Department of Social Services*** (DSS) serves families and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance, and independent living. Call your local DSS office (in the Blue pages of your telephone book under "Connecticut, State of") or check the DSS Internet site at www.dss.state.ct.us for more information about any of the following programs:

- **Temporary Family Assistance** (TFA), previously Aid to Families with Dependent Children, is a program funded by the state and federal government that provides financial and medical assistance to eligible families. The TFA program is designed to enable very poor families to provide basic necessities for their children. Many families eligible for TFA are also eligible for food stamps and energy assistance.
- **CONNPACE** (Pharmaceutical Assistance) pays the cost of prescription drugs, after a co-payment per prescription, for eligible adults 65 and over and adults with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits. For more information on enrollment, call toll-free 1-800-423-5026.
- **Medicaid (Title XIX)** is a federal program, administered by the State of Connecticut, that provides medical coverage for low-income residents who meet certain eligibility requirements. Anyone needing help with paying past, current or future medical expenses is encouraged to apply.
- **State Comprehensive Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Section 8 Rental Assistance Program** provide rent subsidies to low and moderate income households who meet eligibility requirements.
- **Emergency Shelter Services** programs include: grants supporting emergency shelters statewide and transitional living programs; emergency shelter/housing placement of families made homeless by natural disaster, fire or eviction; eviction intervention; and social work services to homeless families.

“Special Education Is Not A Place”
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section V. Services for Adults with Disabilities
Page 4

- **Eviction Prevention Program** assists low and moderate income residents who are at risk of becoming homeless or losing their homes due to an inability to pay their rent or mortgage, and attempts to prevent litigation, eviction, or foreclosure, through assessment, community-based mediation, conflict resolution, and the use of a rent bank.
- **Security Deposit Assistance** helps homeless individuals and families afford a move into rental housing. Applicants must receive public assistance; those applicants who meet the income limits and other criteria may be eligible for the equivalent of one month's rent.
- **State Supplement for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (State Supplement)** is designed to supplement assistance received from the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. Actual receipt of SSI is not required. For example, recipients of a low monthly Social Security benefit, private pension, Veterans' benefits, or limited income from another source may still qualify for the State Supplement.
- **Adult Services** provides home care services to eligible people with disabilities. Social workers coordinate planning and management of services to help clients stay independent in the community. Services include homemaker, housekeeper, choreperson, adult companion, day care, and home-delivered meals. Income/asset eligibility applies.
- **Personal Care Assistance** provides grants to individuals with disabilities to help pay for personal assistance they need in order for them to obtain or retain employment. Income eligibility applies.
- **Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Medicaid Waiver Program** allows those who receive Medicaid assistance flexibility in obtaining home care support. Under this program, the individual is responsible for the hiring, training, supervision and payment of the PCA. To apply for the PCA waiver, contact the regional Department of Social Services Office in your area.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury-Related Services** provides funding for placement in rehabilitation facilities or day treatment programs that provide behavior management, case management and home care services for people with traumatic brain injury.

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are private, non-profit service programs that assist persons with disabilities to achieve their maximum independence and control of their lives and to develop skills to live and work in the community. The four core services are advocacy, information and referral, peer counseling and skills training. The following is a list Connecticut's Independent Living Centers:

Connecticut's Independent Living Centers

Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County (DRCFC) 80 Ferry Boulevard - Stratford, CT 06497 (203) 378-6977 (Voice) (203) 378-3248 (TDD)	Center for Disability Rights (CDR) 764A Campbell Avenue West Haven, CT 06516 (203) 934-7077 (Voice) (203) 934-7078 (TDD)
Independence Unlimited (IU) 151 New Park Avenue Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 523-5021 (Voice) (860) 523-5603 (TDD)	Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC) 107 Route Thirty-Two North Franklin, CT 06254 (860) 823-1898 (Voice & TDD)
Independence Northwest (IN) Route 63 Professional Center - Suite 200, 1183 New Haven Road Naugatuck, CT 06770 (203) 729-3299 (Voice & TDD)	

The **State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped** lends books and magazines on disc, cassette or in Braille. Playback equipment such as tape recorders, is provided free of charge to any Connecticut adult or child who is prevented by a visual or physical disability from reading ordinary-size print. Call or write to request information on certification procedures: 198 West Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut 06067-3545. Telephone: (860) 566-2151; toll-free: 1-800-842-4516. Visit their Internet site at www.cslib.org/lbph.htm.

Section VI.

Additional Resources

Useful Internet Sites

www.nichcy.org

National Information Center on Children and Youth with Disabilities

www.wrightslaw.com

contains information on special education law and advocacy

www.ericec.org

Clearinghouse on Disability and Gifted Education

www.reedmartin.com

contains information about special education law and advocacy strategies

www.dssc.org/frc/oseptad

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs –
Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network

Legal Rights

Statewide Legal Services
425 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
1-800-453-3320 (toll-free)

Children's Law Center
110 Bartholomew Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
1-888-529-3667 (toll-free)

Center for Children's Advocacy
UConn School of Law
65 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 570-5327

Commission on Human Rights
and Opportunities
21 Grand Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 541-3400 or
1-800-477-5737 (toll-free)

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 2

Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
60B Weston Street, Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 297-4300 (Voice); 1-800-842-7303 (toll-free Voice/TDD)
(860) 566-2102 (TDD)

Private Agencies/Organizations (information, advocacy and support)

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
338 Main Street
Niantic, CT 06357
(860) 739-3089 or
1-800-445-2722 (toll-free)

Padres Abriendo Puertas (PAP)
60B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 297-4391

Special Education Resource Center
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457
(860)-632-1485

Parent to Parent Network
263 Farmington Avenue
Farmington, CT 06032
(860) 679-2397

Council on Developmental Disabilities
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 418-6160 or
1-800-653-1134 (toll-free)

Americans with Disabilities Act
Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC)
60B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 297-4383

Western Connecticut Association for
Human Rights (WeCAHR)
211 Main Street
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 792-3540

A.J. Pappanikou Center/
University Center for Excellence in
Developmental Disabilities
263 Farmington Avenue – MC 6222
Farmington, CT 06030
(860) 679-1500 or
1-866-623-1315 (toll-free)

African-Caribbean American
Parent Group (AFCAMP)
60B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 297-4358

Advocacy Unlimited
300 Russell Road
Wethersfield, CT 06109
(860) 667-0460 or
1-800-573-6929 (toll-free)

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 3

Connecticut Coalition for Inclusive
Education (CCIE)
PO Box 331053
West Hartford, CT 06110
(860) 953-8335

New England Assistive Technology (NEAT)
Marketplace
120 Holcomb Street
Hartford, CT 06112
(860) 242-2274 ext. 3378 or
1-866-526-4492 (toll-free)

Easter Seals of Connecticut
85 Jones Street – PO Box 100
Hebron, CT 06248
(860) 228-9438 or
1-800-874-7687 (toll-free)

Corporation for Independent Living
30 Jordan Lane
Wethersfield, CT 06109
(860) 563-6011

PATH (Parents Available to Help)
PO Box 611
Trumbull, CT 06611
1-800-399-7284 (toll-free)

Connecticut Family Voices
PO Box 260538
Hartford, CT 06126
(860) 525-3640 or (860) 456-8584

Connecticut Women & Disability Network
60B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 297-4381

FORConn
(Friends of Retarded Citizens of
Connecticut)
(203) 375-1796

Yale Child Study Center
Developmental Disabilities Clinic
230 South Frontage Road
New Haven, CT 06520
(203) 737-4197

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
475 Clinton Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06005
(203) 368-4291

New England ADA and Accessible
Information Technology Center
1-800-949-4232 (toll-free)

Child Development Center
Connecticut Children's Medical Center
282 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 545-8680

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 4

Support for Our Town's
Exceptional People (STEP) of Darien
(203) 655-2535 extension 61

People First
P.O. Box 2453
Bristol, CT 06011-2453

Special Education Network (SPEDNET)
P.O. Box 1612
New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 966-9709

Special Education Network (SPEDNET)
in Wilton - (203) 834-0757

City Services

CITY OF WATERBURY
Office for Persons with Disabilities
236 Grand Street
Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-8273 (V/TTY)

CITY OF NEW HAVEN
Office for Persons with Disabilities
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 946-8122 (V/TTY)

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
Office for Persons with Disabilities
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604
(203) 576-8301 (V/TTY)

TOWN OF NEW BRITAIN
Commission on Persons with Disabilities
27 West Main Street – Room 310
New Britain, CT 06051
(860) 826-3366 (V)
(860) 827-1642 (TTY)

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
Office for Persons with Disabilities
Town Hall, 611 Old Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06430
(203) 256-3130 (V/TTY)

Youth Service Bureaus
Call your town hall to see if your town has
such an agency

Disability Specific

Autism Society
125 Harrington Street
Meriden, CT 06451
(203) 235-7629

Cystic Fibrosis Association
185 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109
(860) 257-6907

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 5

Connecticut Families for Effective Autism
Treatment (FEAT)
PO Box 388
Ellington, CT 06029
(860) 571-3888

ARC of Connecticut
1030 New Britain Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06110
(860) 953-8335

American Diabetes Association
300 Research Parkway
Meriden, CT 06450
(203) 639-0385 or
1-888-342-2383 (toll-free)

National Federation of the Blind
580 Burnside Avenue – Suite 1
East Hartford, CT 06108
(860) 289-1971

Arthritis Foundation
35 Cold Springs Road – Suite 411
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(860) 563-1177 or
1-800-563-6018 (toll-free)

Spina Bifida Association of Connecticut
PO Box 2545
Hartford, CT 06146
1-800-574-6274 (toll-free)

Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress
P.O. Box 340385
Hartford, CT 06134-0385
1-888-486-8537

Prader-Willi Syndrome Association
e-mail at: pwsactchapter@yahoo.com or
through national association:
1-800-926-4797 (toll-free)

United Cerebral Palsy of Eastern CT
Shaw's Cove 6 – Suite 101
New London, CT 06320
(860) 447-3889

Epilepsy Foundation
1800 Silas Deane Highway – Suite 168
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(860) 721-9226

Leukemia Society
300 Research Parkway, Suite 310
Meriden, CT 06450
1-888-282-9465 (toll-free)

Muscular Dystrophy Association
78 Eastern Boulevard
Glastonbury, CT 06033
(860) 633-4466, (203) 777-1273

United Cerebral Palsy Association
80 Whitney Street
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 236-6201

Spina Bifida Association of Connecticut
PO Box 2545
Hartford, CT 06146
1-800-574-6274 (toll-free)

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 6

Tourette Syndrome Association of
Connecticut 531 Podunk Road
Guilford, CT 06437
(203) 458-1077

Learning Disabilities Association of CT
999 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 560-1711

Multiple Sclerosis Society
Greater Hartford Chapter
705 North Mountain Road, Suite G102
Newington, CT 06111
(860) 721-6001 or
1-800-344-4867 (toll-free)

Connecticut Association for Children with
Learning Disabilities
25 Van Zant Street, Suite 15-5
East Norwalk, CT 06855
(203) 838-5010

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation
18 North Main Street
Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 561-1153

Aspergers Syndrome Support Group
27 Broadview Road
Cheshire, CT 06410
(203) 271-0859

Spinal Cord Injury Association
Gaylord Hospital
400 Gaylord Farms Road
Wallingford, CT 06492
(203) 284-1045

Attention Deficit Disorder -
Connecticut Chapter
Call 1-800-233-4050 to obtain information
about Connecticut groups

Mental Health Association of Connecticut
20-30 Beaver Street
Wethersfield, CT 06109
(860) 529-1970 or
1-800-842-1501 (toll-free)

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, CT
Chapter 151 New Park Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 586-2319

Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction
Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Association
P.O. Box 3010
Milford, CT 06460
1-800-952-2037 (toll-free)

Brain Injury Association
1800 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 224
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(860) 721-8111
Family Help Line:
1-800-278-8242 (toll-free)

"Special Education Is Not A Place"
An Advocacy Guide for Parents and Students
Section VI. Additional Resources
page 7

National Organization for Rare Disorders
Route 37, P.O. Box 8923
New Fairfield, CT 06812
1-800-999-6673 (toll-free)

Connecticut Parents Association for
the Blind and Visually Impaired
P.O. Box 123
Newtown, CT 06470
1-800-529-3223

National Association for Parents of Children with
Visual Impairments (NAPVI)
P.O. Box 317
Watertown, MA 02471
(617) 972-7441